SALLIE'S BOY.

BY JESSIE M. E. SAXBY,

Author of "Dora Coyne," "Lindeman Brothers," etc.

"I have a tryst to keep this afternoon, Hubert." *p.* 148.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I WAKE, AND I DISCERN THE TRUTH."

"You wanted to know about Mr. Smithers," the Squire began, when he was seated with his chief alone.

"Yes, I did," said Mr. Walker shortly.

"I believe very much in your wisdom and penetration, Mr. Walker, and I believe even more in your good feeling, so I have come to you to-night, as I might to a father, to lay before you a very perplexing affair which involves confession of much folly—nay, sin—on my own part."

"Out with it. I'll do what I can for you."

Then Hubert told the whole story as we know it, and a little more.

The Baron's death had come about in this wise: When Dubourg started up and denounced his associates as swindlers, Hubert instantly took his side, told the Baron he had seen through some of his schemes, and given him diamond cut diamond.

Dubourg vehemently declared he had seen signals pass between Smithers and the Baron, and that he believed them to be confederates.

"Then," said the Squire to their host, "if your confederate keeps Dubourg's money I as assuredly shall keep yours."

"You shall not carry one cent of mine from this house, you British cur!" the Baron shouted, and flashed out a revolver. Holmes rushed upon him, but not in time to prevent a shot being fired. It missed its mark, and the bullet intended for the Englishman struck Dubourg. Then followed a confused struggle among all four. Holmes wrested the weapon from the Baron's hand, but had it snatched from him by Dubourg. Smithers dragged Holmes off the Baron, and the moment he did so the Russian turned like a wild beast on the wounded man, not knowing that Dubourg was in possession of the revolver. A second shot, and the Baron fell dead. The awful catastrophe brought the others to their senses. Smithers was the calmest of the three. He protested his innocence, and laid before Dubourg what he had won. It was then hurriedly agreed that since Dubourg's wound was not dangerous (though it crippled him for the time being), his companion should hasten away at once, and Smithers should remain till an alarm was raised and aid for the wounded man at hand.

"I can clear out more easily than Mr. Holmes," Smithers said; "I know this place well, and I have friends who will help me. Moreover, he has a wife to think about. I have nobody but myself. If we two Englishmen disappear it will naturally be supposed that we shot the others. No one will accuse M. Dubourg, seeing he, too, is a sufferer. Go, Mr. Holmes, make tracks for the railway at once, and leave your friend to me."

Dubourg added, "Get clear off, Holmes, at once. I'm not much hurt, and you can help me best by not appearing in this. I wronged this friend, I fear. Now go. Think of our wives. Go!"

Confused and hurried, Holmes did as he was bid, and escaped as we have learned, feeling sure of Smithers' integrity, and grateful to him for brave and timely assistance. Not one suspicion of him had crossed Hubert's mind until his interview with Dubourg, and doubts of the Frenchman's statement had grown considerably of late.

When he had told all to Mr. Walker, he added, "I am willing—indeed, I should prefer—to tell Smithers in your presence that you have been informed of all this; but, sir, I should like to have your opinion. I shrink from appearing to accuse a man, and yet I could not let him ingratiate himself with you and others without confessing the truth. What *should* I believe? The two statements stand so directly opposed, and—well, I may as well add—I have on more than one occasion found that Dubourg was not always as straightforward as one could wish. He is not a man of high principle, and that may tell in Smithers' favour. What do you say?"

"I say that Smithers is a big scamp. Do you know how he employs the greater part of his time here? No! I see you don't. Well, I know, because I've been with him. Oh, you need not start, nor be alarmed on my account—though I thank you for it. I only made believe to be lured a bit, just that I might find out a little what he was up to. To be honest, I believed he was one of your former gaming friends, and I was afraid he might decoy you off again, or, worse, get his fingers over my boy Ben. Once he was good enough to explain a method of play founded, he said, on clear mathematical principles, and he assured me that his friend Mr. Holmes had won a fortune not long since through it. *That* let me into his secret, Squire! He came here to share that fortune with you, or, if you could not be induced to do that, he meant to blacken your character, and *oblige* you to come over to his side, money and all. You were not aware of it, but no doubt he had kept an eye on all your movements, and it was no accident which brought you together on board the *Water Witch*. Oh, he's a blackguard! He frequents the gaming-houses here, and he expects he is going to make a pigeon of old Joshua Walker! I'd like to see him do it!"

"What shall I do? what can I do?" Hubert asked, in a helpless way that made the old man smile.

"Don't do anything. Leave him to me. I'll find a way of hurrying him out of Cape Town, rest assured. There is really nothing *you* can do, for to denounce Smithers is to bring a hornets' nest on your own head, and to endanger the Frenchman's neck—not that *it* is worth much; but that's aside of the chief point. What you wanted opinion on was—Smithers. I've given you my opinion of Smithers, and I've given you proof to back my opinion. We can't exactly punish him; he has been too 'cute all through; but we can, and shall, get quit of him. You've done yourself a good turn by coming to me with your straightforward statement, for I may tell you that if I had got at the truth through any other source I'd have shaken my hands clean of the Squire of Wately—that's a fact. But you've done the right and manly thing; and as for Smithers, though we can't punish him, there's One who can. Mr. Holmes, I believe there are degrees of punishment in God's hand, and I never doubt the tempter will receive double what the tempted gets. The man who sells drink is worse than he who buys. The professional gambler who lures a weak boy to squander his father's inheritance is twenty times the worse villain of the two. Be sure that though we cannot convict Smithers, God can, and will."

"*I* deserve the judgment of Heaven as much as he," Hubert said, with deep emotion; "I cannot find excuse for my own sin. In the Almighty's sight I have been guilty as he. We don't know how he was educated, or what temptations there may have been in his way. Possibly there were few, if any, good influences around him in early life."

"Oh, come, come, I'm not going to have you find excuses for Smithers, and I won't have you judge yourself too hardly. There *is* a very wide difference between the sin you've been guilty of and those committed by Smithers. You can retrieve, and no man can say you've acted dishonestly; but he—he is a low, sneaking thief, without one spark of honour or good feeling. There! them's my sentiments; and as you profess to give my judgment some weight, you may as well take encouragement from what I say."

They conversed a great deal more upon this and kindred subjects; but we have heard enough for our purpose. It will be sufficient to add that Hubert left his chief that night with mind relieved and heart greatly strengthened.

He said to himself as he walked home, "What foolish, narrow notions one imbibes when young, to be sure! I always believed that a classical education and the like were necessary for the formation of a liberal mind and well-balanced judgment. Now it's as plain as that the sun shines somewhere that good old Walker never read a Latin book in his life; and yet here am I, with all my so-called culture, a mere blunderer in

wisdom and nobility of mind beside him. He shocks me by putting a knife to his mouth instead of a silver fork! but I wish words as good and true fell from my lips as fall from his. There's something more than education and good blood wanted for the making of a gentleman. I wish with all my soul I had as clean a record to show as has the plain old man who to-night inspired me with new hope."

Hubert's gratitude and admiration for Mr. Walker would have been mightily increased if he could have known some of the thoughts and schemes which kept the old man awake and pleasingly exercised far into the night.

He did not lie down to rest until he had sketched out a plan by which he hoped to send Smithers about his business without making a rumpus; "for," said the old man to himself, "after all, who am I that I should mete justice to him? He'll get his deserts sooner or later without my interference, and vengeance is with the Lord."

Having reached that conclusion, he allowed himself to go to sleep, little thinking that Smithers was being got rid of quietly enough, and without any power of his being exercised.

Next morning, while he was lingering over his coffee, Ben came hurriedly in with a look of great concern on his face.

"What's up, boy? What's wrong, my son?" Mr. Walker asked, with much apprehension. "Tell the trouble quick."

"Hubert told me to come to you with the news. He was called this morning to poor Mr. Smithers. No one knew him better than the Squire, so the people called *him*. I went to the hotel with Hubert, and we found poor Mr. Smithers had died suddenly. He had been taken ill in a moment, and before a doctor could be brought he was gone. The doctor says it was heart complaint. The Squire is a good deal cut up. You see, it is so sad the poor fellow being a stranger, and then the suddenness of it! Hubert asked me to go and tell you at once."

Mr. Walker accompanied Ben back to the hotel, and found Hubert still sitting horror-stricken by the corpse. The careless smile which Smithers had taught his face to wear as a mask still lingered upon his lips, and those who knew his real character, and who looked pityingly upon his lifeless form, prayed that the mercy of God had left that shadow of a smile as a sign that though no human being is exempt from the punishment of deeds done in the flesh, yet no soul is beyond the pale of Divine forgiveness.

CHAPTER XX.

"THE PATH BY WHICH WE TWAIN DID GO."

A VERY few days after the death of Smithers, Ben Linton received an imperious order to present himself without fail at a certain hour that evening at Mr. Walker's house. The lad knew his good friend's "ways" by that time, and could receive his curiously worded mandate with the best of humours. He presented himself before his adopted father at the appointed time, and was considerably disconcerted by the words with which he was greeted—

"Boy, I want you to give up that idea of making a fortune for sake of restoring Wately to its Squire."

Ben's blue eyes opened very wide indeed, and his mouth opened too, whereat Mr. Walker smiled and nodded as if he were well pleased.

"Yes, that's what I want of you, my son. And if you are a dutiful son you will obey me. Oh, come here, boy! come and give me your two hands, and let me tell you why I want you to give up your dream."

Ben went near and put his hands into those of the old man, who, with glistening eyes, went on—

"For why, boy? For *this* why; *I've* got a fortune, and it is at my son's disposal—a part of it, at least. Bless you, Ben, it will only take a slice out of *my* plum cake to set Wately Manor free from those rascally money-lenders. I'd have told you my purpose sooner, only I wanted to be sure of the Squire. I don't want good money of mine to fly after bad money of his, and I determined I must make certain that his repentance was no mere passing thing before I set him in his old place. But there now! I go on talking of *my* doing this and that. It isn't going to be me at all, but *you*—you, my son Ben, the comfort and delight of my old age. Think I'd hand over thousands of pounds to clear the way for Hubert Holmes? Not I. Not though his sweet wife is the most angelic woman I ever saw, since my young mother made the mistake of leaving me and going to heaven when I was scarce three years old. No, Ben, I wouldn't do this for the Squire, and what is more, I would not do it for his wife. But for you! Don't you see, boy? I want to buy a right in you. I want you to be tied to me by a bond stronger than any bond between you and any other person. Now, look here. I've got it all cut and dry. First point: Your 'Mam-lee' loves you dearly, of course; but the Squire comes *foremost* with her. That you know and allow. Second point: I don't care for anybody or anything in this world so much as I care for you. My money has had no value for me since we met, except for what it may do for you, my son. Third point—oh, hang the points! What I want you, command you, to do is to prepare yourself to go to Europe with me. Roy can manage our affairs here. As for the Squire, he is no manner of clerk at all. He'll never learn the business; we must take him with us. As for his wife, she'll die of fever if she stays much longer in Cape Town, that's a fact; all nice ladies do. She must pack and be off to Europe, to England, to Wately Manor. And you, my boy, are the young prince who must order all these affairs, and give your sister her home again without wasting a lifetime about it. Ah! I am too rough, too abrupt for you, Ben; but I mean well, indeed I do, and God knows I love you."

I dare say nobody is surprised to hear that after such an astounding speech Ben and Mr. Walker fell into each other's arms after a not common but satisfactory manner, and realised that the bond of adopted parent and child was as strong as if they had been father and son according to the flesh!

Ben, of course, had no hesitation in accepting the generosity of his adopted father. He knew very well how wounded the old man would be by a refusal, and he believed Sallie and the Squire could easily be brought to see the matter from his point of view.

"If," he said, with that forethought which was his chief characteristic, "you authorise me to let Hubert understand the money is a loan, to be repaid in the course of years and at his convenience, I think he will agree."

"Make any conditions you please, my boy. I leave the arrangements entirely to you. Only I stipulate that you prevent their talking to *me* about it. You understand. I know the sort of thing that may happen otherwise. There will be the Squire coming jabbering about 'kindness' and 'gratitude' and all that nonsense, and Mrs. Holmes, she'll look at me with brimming eyes, which I can't and won't stand, Ben. Now you've got to screen me from all that. Let everybody concerned understand that the money is yours, not mine.

Why, *all* I have will be yours, my son, ere long. Surely it is right that you should use some of your father's wealth for a purpose so cherished and so noble."

Thus he talked, and thus he won Ben to ready and joyful acquiescence, and there was not a happier couple in the world that night than rough Joshua Walker and his beloved *protégé*. Outwardly they were strikingly contrasted, but in heart they were like enough in many ways to justify the tie they had adopted of father and son.

I wish I could find words adequate to describe Sallie's feelings when her "Baby" made known the proposals of Mr. Walker. It was like a page out of a fairy tale, as unexpected and as wonderful; and her soul went up in exceeding thankfulness to God for such tokens of His care and bounty.

Some people are harmed more than benefited by a windfall of fortune, but it was not so with Hubert Holmes. Adversity had been of use to him, but prosperity coming when it did helped on the good work begun in his soul. It was like the summer sunshine after spring rains, calling into leaf and blossom the seed sown in tears. Right thankfully did he accept Mr. Walker's generosity, bestowed through Ben; and gratefully did he determine to make good use of the help so given.

"We shall not often leave the Manor, Sallie sweet," he said, "after we get there, and with God's help I hope to be a better Squire in time to come than I was in time past."

She had no fears then about him. She was sure he would keep every good resolution now made, for Sallie knew that her husband was not resting on his own strength, but on power Divine.

"The way has been long, and dark, and sometimes weary," she said, kneeling, with none to hear but the Unseen. "But surely goodness and mercy have followed me, and we shall reach our desired haven at last."

Yes, in due time the gates of Wately Manor opened once more to receive its lawful master and mistress, and there was much rejoicing over the event privately. There were no public demonstrations, for Hubert had expressly desired there should be nothing of the sort. Though few of his neighbours or tenants knew the humiliating story of his difficulties, he felt its shadow still on his life, and could not bear that he should seem to return in triumph.

The years that had passed were almost like a dream to Sallie when she found herself once more sitting in the chair in her father's den, with her mother's picture overhead, and the naturalist reclining, little changed from what he was when last she saw him, among his precious litter of treasures and trumpery. Nothing seemed changed. There was Aunt Julia, energetic and masterful as ever, and Roger very much what he had been as a little child. No changes in the den and in these three. But in the other rooms, though the same old furniture stood in its accustomed places, the *children's* belongings had vanished, leaving a certain prim, orderly desolation which struck painfully upon Sallie's heart.

And the children were not there, only Ben and herself, besides the fixture, blind Roger.

She went from room to room, and said sadly to herself, "I miss the children. Oh! I miss the children."

It was almost a relief when Hubert came to escort her back to the Manor, for "Oaklea is not Oaklea without the children," she said to him, to which the Squire smilingly replied—

"You surely don't regret that the boys and girls have growed—as Ben calls it? And there is really little room for regret, my dear, when we consider how very creditably they have growed—even that wild pair in London, that I used to predict would come to no good. Could anything be more satisfactory, sweet, than their unique little establishment and their merry contentment?"

"There is truly much to be thankful for, Hubert," was all she said, and he never knew—never—that there always remained in Sallie's breast the sting of having left "the children" before completing her duty to them.

When their first visit to Oaklea had been paid, the couple walked to the Manor gates in silence, but there Sallie paused, and smiling said, "You can go in and keep Mr. Walker company for a little while. By-and-by, within half an hour say, you and he can come and meet me on the meadow. I have a tryst to keep by the Silver this afternoon, Hubert, and I don't want you!"

He stooped and kissed her, and went in at his own gate without speaking. He could not trust himself to speak, for Sallie had told him of the day when she had carried Ben across the stepping-stones, and how her words had sunk into the boy's mind, and how he had dreamed and planned for her, and achieved the desire of his soul at last. She had shown her husband the forget-me-nots she had plucked that day, and treasured for sake of love's young dream through all the dark years of her married life. He knew it all—knew how *he* had failed, and how Ben had succeeded, and when she spoke of a "tryst," and he remembered that her young brother had gone towards the river a short time before, he knew very well the sort of meeting there would be beside the stepping-stones.

Never before had the Silver bounded so merrily down Snafell, never had it glided more peacefully between its fringes of meadow grass, never had its forget-me-nots looked up to blue skies with brighter eyes or bent with softer kisses over its blue water, never had its voice sounded more musical, never had its waves gleamed more gladly, than when Sallie and Ben stood upon its margin just where they had paused so many years before.

The queenly maiden had become a pale, grave woman, and the boy was a man; but the love of that olden time had lived changeless amid change. Their loving eyes exchanged looks as trustful and tender as of yore, their hands clung together with as much confiding sympathy as when life lay all before them unknown.

"Mam-lee," said Ben, "it has come at last—my dream! Now let us cross the river." And, with her "Baby's" strong young arms guiding and supporting, Sallie passed over the Silver by its ancient stepping-stones, while the water and the rustling grasses caught the murmur of forget-me-nots and whispered, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

THE END.

A DREAM.

BY M. S. HAYCRAFT.

"Oh, what wilt thou be in the long years before thee,
When darkens the gold that is crowning thy head?
Oh, what wilt thou do when the morning light o'er thee
Hath passed, and the gloaming leaves shadow instead?

"Oh, where wilt thou go in the journey of being?
Those little sweet steps, will they climb unto fame?
And what will the eyes of my darling be seeing,
And what will he know of life's favour or blame?

"The wee head that nestles so softly in sleeping
The thoughts of a sage may hereafter enshrine;
The little soul trusted awhile to my keeping
May reach to high places past knowledge of mine.

"The fingers, like tendrils about me entwining,
May waken such music as rings through the spheres;
The dear little lips, like the rose-petals shining,
May sing all the world into hushing and tears.

"I would that thy pathway, my babe, were revealèd,
And God moved the curtain one moment aside;
I would thy life-secrets were sweetly unsealèd,
And I could rejoice in thy triumphs so wide."

Thus musing, a mother passed softly to dreaming,
And God gave the answer in vision that day;
His angels drew near, and His glory was beaming,
And baby's sweet footsteps moved gently away.

No laurels to weave him a garland were blending,
But as he went on and her gazing grew dim
There floated around him the song never-ending,
And baby rose up mid the Paradise hymn.

She shuddered in waking and clasped him the nearer,
Then folded her hands with the voice of a prayer—
"I ask not, O God, that his future be clearer;
My baby is safe in Thine infinite care.

"I bless Thee that now on my bosom I rest him—
Thy gift the most precious, yet still all Thine own—
Now, now, ere the burden of years hath oppressed him;
His future I leave to Thy keeping alone.

"Lord, do as Thou wilt with the greatness and splendour
And glory I asked in my cravings so wild;
But keep him, but fold him, O Shepherd most tender,
On earth or above, as Thine own little child!"

PHYSICAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

BY MRS. SCHARLIEB, M.D., B.S.

I.—Introductory.

IT has been truly pointed out by Herbert Spencer that while those interested in the breeding of cattle take the greatest care in the selection of stock and in the rearing of the young, the far more important matter of the rearing of children is almost entirely neglected. Men and women enter on the duties of parents without one thought as to their fitness—mental, moral, or physical—for so momentous a duty. "Seriously, is it not an astonishing fact that though on the treatment of offspring depends their lives or deaths, and their moral welfare or ruin, yet not one word of instruction on the treatment of offspring is ever given to those who will by-and-by be parents? Is it not monstrous that the fate of a new generation should be left to the chances of unreasoning custom, impulse, fancy, joined with the suggestions of ignorant nurses? We know that if a merchant should commence business without any knowledge of arithmetic and book-keeping, we should exclaim at his folly and look for disastrous consequences, or if, before studying anatomy, a man set up as a surgical operator, we should wonder at his audacity and pity his patients. But that parents should begin the difficult task of rearing children without ever having given a thought to the principles—physical, moral, or intellectual—which ought to guide them, excites neither surprise at the actors nor pity for their victims."

All this, so well put by Mr. Spencer, is too true. In all ranks of life young people are, in too many instances, both ignorant and careless in the matter; hence a partner for life is selected solely from motives of affection or from considerations of so-called worldly interest, without that regard to physical, mental, and moral health which only can ensure the satisfactory development of family and race. The time has come at which it is a clear duty so to select the mothers and fathers of the next generation as to endow it with healthy bodies and healthy minds. We have gradually come to understand that the brain is the organ of mind; that upon its healthy constitution and development depend not only mental abilities, but moral qualities. We are now realising that the body is one and indivisible so far as the performance of its functions is concerned; that if one member suffer, all others suffer with it; that if the blood be not healthy and capable of conveying suitable materials, the various tissues, whether muscular, osseous, or nervous, cannot be built up; that from impoverished or unhealthy blood the glands cannot elaborate normal secretions. Hence the dyspepsia of the anæmic, and not their dyspepsia only, but from the want of nourishment and development of their nerve-cells, their want of brain power, their *moral* as well as *intellectual* feebleness. Hence we are led to conclude that crime and insanity—*i.e.*, unhealthiness of body and mind—are closely allied; and more than ever is exemplified the truth that a fig-tree will not bear olive-berries, neither a vine figs. We are becoming gradually convinced of the immense influence of heredity, and the difference that exists in the potentialities of children.

Gradually we shall learn to act on the truths that are becoming familiar, and shall realise the paramount importance of doing all in our power to give to each child a healthy constitution, a fair start in the race of life. Meanwhile there are millions of children around us who have to run their course with the qualities inherent in them. For these it is too late to talk of careful selection and of pre-natal care. We can only help them to make the best of themselves, whether they possess the ten talents, the five, or the one only! As practical economists, as philosophers and Christians, we must carefully consider how best to fashion the material that is ready to our hands. Each child has come into the world with certain possibilities and certain limitations. This one is the heir to the culture and self-control of generations; that one is the heir to degradation, to weakness, and may be to crime. That this is but too true the record of the so-called criminal classes proves; but it is equally true that careful training—the development of all good and the repression of all evil tendencies—will in many instances counteract, to an appreciable extent, the influence of heredity.

How, then, shall we begin our education? Since the brain is the organ of the mind, since the acts of the body are a faithful index of the condition of the moral nature, and since experience convinces us of the closeness of their union, we should be unwise to neglect so favourable an opportunity as the culture of the body affords. Physical education, then, is one of the means, and one of which we can readily avail ourselves, to promote the well-being of the individual and of the race. By physical education we understand all means for the development of the powers of the body. It therefore includes the supply of sufficient and suitable food; the due regulation of exercise and rest; provision of pure air, adequate warmth, light, clothing, and comfortable furniture. In fact, as admirably put by Dr. Charles Roberts, "physical training is not directed solely to the production of large and strong muscles, but to the perfecting of all the functions of animal life." An ideal system of physical education would include every influence that develops and trains every organ; and some promise of its realisation is to be found in the interest now taken in "anthropometry" (a system for observing and recording height, weight, acuity of vision, hearing, judgment of angles, etc.).

Within the limits of this series of articles I cannot hope to do justice to a subject which is co-extensive with physiology and its sister sciences, but shall content myself with some remarks on the means of physical education, the evil effects of neglect, and the benefits to be expected from its faithful and intelligent pursuit. To have healthy children mothers must give more thought to this subject.

GARDENING FOR OCTOBER.

How to Grow Bulbs.

Just as the summer flowers fail us, comes this fascinating group of plants, which cheer our homes in winter, filling them with brightness and sweet scents.

Hyacinth, tulip, narcissus, crocus, snowdrop, scilla, and jonquil bulbs will be treated of in this paper; and these may easily be procured from any respectable nurseryman early in October, when they should be started at once, as all bulbs deteriorate when kept out of soil.

They may be grown in pots, in sand and water, or in the fertilising moss which has been patented by Dumesnil, and also by Wood and Son (Wood Green, N.). This is very useful for window plants of all sorts, but especially for these bulbs, which may be arranged in this moss in china bowls, glasses, or baskets (with a tin to retain the moisture), the moss supplying all necessary nourishment to the roots, without any soil being needed. Charming groups may be arranged in this way by a judicious selection of plants and colours. For instance, a dwarf pink hyacinth may be surrounded by white hyacinths of the same height, and these fringed with the lovely little blue scilla siberica. These may be grown in an old tongue-tin, which can be filled with fertilising moss or sand and kept watered, until the flowers appear, when the tin should be placed in an old china bowl, and the whole surface covered with fresh green moss, leaving only the little plants to peep out. In this way a very lovely drawing-room decoration may be had at a slight cost. Those who have not a china bowl can cover the whole tin with fresh moss by means of small wire or string, and this, if placed in a plate, and watered with a rose each day, will keep beautifully green.

Other combinations of colour can be arranged by using crimson Van Thol tulips, with white crocuses or snowdrops; or white narcissus, red hyacinths, and blue scillas; each grower exercising her own taste in forming lovely groups, only remembering that those bulbs which flower at the same time should be selected to grow together.

But those who grow bulbs for profit should use pots, as there is a ready sale for well-grown plants of this kind just bursting into bloom. If new pots are used, they should be previously soaked in water for a day or two, and then thoroughly dried; old pots being scrubbed clean, both inside and out.

A large hyacinth bulb will take a pot six inches across at the top, but for selling it is desirable to grow plants in the smallest pots which can be conveniently used; and in any case the pots must be proportioned to the bulbs, three tulips being usually placed in one pot, and five or more scillas, to form a group.

The best soil for bulbs is made by sifting good garden loam, and mixing with it half the quantity of rotten leaf mould or old stable manure (such as the remains of a spring hot-bed), and the same amount of coarse sand, either from the sea-shore or a river-bed; the silver sand sold for this purpose being excellent, but very expensive if used in large quantities. This compost should be made two or three weeks before it is used, if possible, and allowed to become thoroughly dry; when it should be carefully picked over to eradicate all worms, grubs, wood-lice, etc., which injure pot plants.

Place a few bits of broken potsherds at the bottom of the pot for drainage, then add a little charcoal, and fill the pot nearly full of soil. Water it thoroughly, then place the bulbs on the surface, and nearly cover them with soil, avoiding any great pressure of the bulb into the compost, as they are apt in this case to start up from the ground when their roots begin to form.

The pots must then be placed in a dark but airy place for about three weeks, while they are making roots; or they may be placed in a box, and covered with dry sand to the depth of three inches, if more convenient. The bulbs will not require more water during this time, if covered; but the surface of the soil, if uncovered, must be kept damp.

There is, however, a danger of mildew attacking the bulbs if the surrounding air be stagnant. They should be carefully looked over at intervals for any sign of this, and if the slightest sign of mildew be apparent, remove the pot at once to a drier place, and sprinkle the affected part with flower of sulphur, after gently removing the mildew with a soft handkerchief.

As soon as a green point appears in the centre of each bulb, it may be removed to a warmer place, such as a sunny window in a dwelling room; or even placed, for a few days, on the top of the kitchen chimney-piece, to induce quick growth. A saucer of water must be supplied for each pot, and this can be filled every morning with water slightly warm, which will be found to bring the plants on rapidly, but the temperature of the water must not be sufficiently high to injure the roots.

As soon as the leaves appear, the plant must have all the sunlight available. Of course those who have a greenhouse will now place their bulbs in it, and if a shelf can be arranged just over the hot-water pipes, the plants will soon be forced into bloom.

But a south window in a room in which there is a fire daily will make a good substitute for glass, if the pots are often turned round, so that the plants do not lean to one side. During a frost they should be moved away from the window, and, if the weather be severe, a lamp burning all night will prevent the temperature becoming too low for them.

Bulbs which have been grown in pots will be worth careful tending after they have bloomed, for they will repay this care during the following season by fresh blossoms, sometimes scarcely inferior to the first.

Directly the flower begins to fade cut it off, and sink the pot in good garden soil, covering it lightly with old stable manure. Be very careful not to injure the leaves or to cover them with soil, for it is on the gradual ripening and fading away of these that success for the next season depends.

Remove the pots from the ground during the following September, and repot the bulbs as directed above, or use them for bedding purposes.

I. L. Richmond.

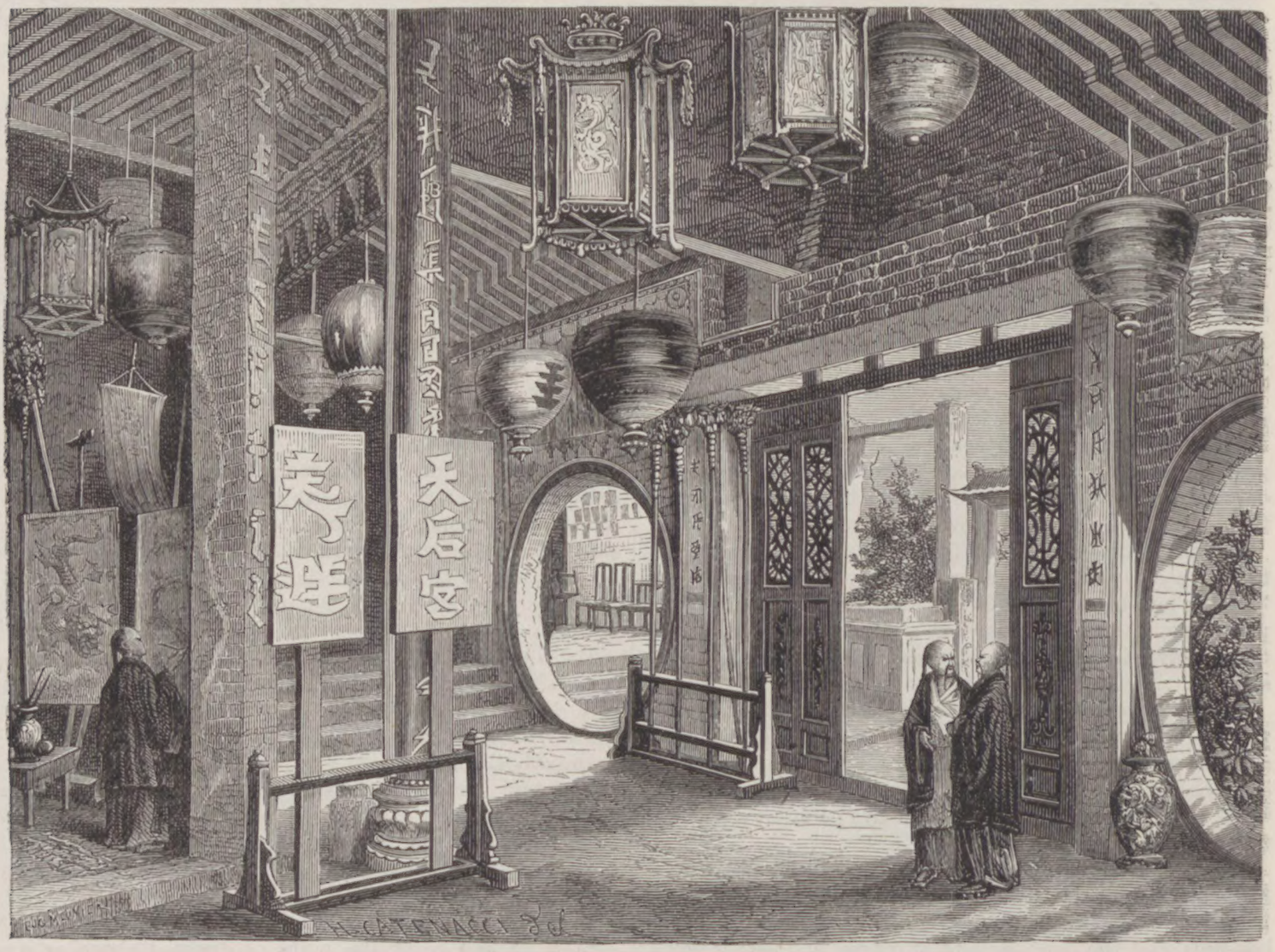
WEDDING OF A CHINESE CHRISTIAN IN NORTH CHINA.

AN EXTRACT FROM A MISSIONARY'S DIARY.

HAN-CHUNG FU.—Last Tuesday I went to a feast given by the father-in-law (Mr. Ho) of Chen-nü-tsz, whose marriage took place yesterday. This was a preliminary feast given to all those who would in any way take part in the ceremony. I went because for the last year and a half I have had the care of her (in the Missionary School in Han-chung Fu), and she clings to me a good deal, poor child. We, that is to say, she, a few elder girl friends, and myself, sat in her little bedroom, and the subject of conversation all the while—at least among the few women present—was what she should wear; they were angry because old Mr. Ho was too stingy to buy flowers for the bride's hair, or cord to tie it, or a comb to comb it!

The ordinary name for marriage here is "*su-f'eo,*" which means "*comb the hair;*" for this reason: A girl before she is married wears her hair in one long plait down her back, tied with red cord; the day of the wedding the front hairs on the forehead are pulled out, and part of the eyebrows, and then the hair is brushed back and twisted round behind in coils, fastened with red cord and silver pins. This so completely transforms the face that one can recognise a married woman at once by the way her hair is dressed.

It is the husband's father who provides all the wedding clothes. While I was there on Tuesday there was a long discourse as to who should pull the hair out. There had already been a woman nominated for this service, but she refused because, she said, as she had never done it before, she was afraid if she did it badly Chen-nü-tsz would *die!* After awhile her wedding clothes, borrowed for the occasion, were brought in—a sea-green silk skirt, embroidered with many colours, and an over-dress of purple silk, extensively braided with various-coloured narrow silk braids, and a white satin embroidered head-dress. Her poor little feet! Oh, what pain she must have suffered since she left school! While with me, and Mrs. Hogge before me, for three and a half years or more, her feet have been unbound, and she has worn ordinary shoes (Chinese, of course); but now her feet have been bound again so tightly that she now wears shoes *as small as any I have seen since I have been in China.* They cannot be much more than two inches long! What I have heard and seen lately only confirms the opinion I have for some time had: that it is not our province to compel girls to unbind their feet; because, though they may unbind them as long as they are with us, yet, as soon as they are



Chinese Shop for the sale of Wedding and Funeral Furniture.

away from our influence, they are sure to bind them again —either because their husbands make them, or because they themselves wish it—and *twice* bound feet are double pain. I do feel myself that I am here to preach Christ, and witness for Him in my life; and I must just let the Holy Spirit instruct the natives Himself concerning this matter. I can only advise, not *compel;* although I know in the case of Chen-nü-tsz that this rebinding of her feet, and to such a dreadful extent, is because her husband has forced her to do so (he a baptised Christian!), yet I also feel convinced that the child herself has only *too willingly* given way to his wishes.

Last Wednesday (yesterday) the wedding took place, and, I am thankful to say, in the chapel, before a crowded audience. The place looked so pretty, all decorated with scarlet cloth and pots of flowers; and we had such a nice little service. Part of it was the usual questions from the Prayer Book, while the bride and bridegroom knelt with their backs to the people. But that which ratified the union in the eyes of the Chinese was the wine-drinking ceremony. On the communion-table stood two little cups of wine. One of these Mr. Easton presented to the bridegroom's man, who in like manner presented it to the bridegroom; the latter having drunk, handed it back. At the same time one of the deacons handed the second cup to the bridesmaid, who handed it to the bride; the bride having drunk, also handed the cup back. Then Mr. Easton mixed the wines by pouring the contents of one cup into another, and then the same ceremony was gone through again, except that this time they both drank from the same cup containing, the mixed wine. After a few words read from the Bible and an address by Mr. Easton, the bride and bridegroom left the chapel together; the former, re-entering her chair, was carried back to her husband's house, whither, in a short time, we all followed her, also in chairs. When she first entered the chapel I hardly recognised Chen-nü-tsz; her long hair all done up, the hair shaved off the forehead, had transformed the child into a woman—and a care-worn woman, too—with pale face and frightened eyes. As she had very nice flowers in her hair, I concluded the father-in-law had been prevailed upon to buy her some. I was glad to see there was no powder on her face, as is usually the custom, or red paint, but she looked very neat and nice in her wedding clothes, except for her deformed feet.

The husband, Mr. Ho, has one large open shop on the street, with two rooms behind, one for his father and one for himself and wife. When I arrived I passed through the shop, filled with wedding guests, into the bride's little room behind, and found her sitting on the bed, with a crowd of women and girls all around. The child looked more like herself again, and laughed quite happily. After awhile we were invited into the shop, one by one (as we were so many), to see the presents sent by the bride's mother, as a sort of dowry. All the presents which friends gave, being put together, made a good show, and were carried through the streets, accompanied by the most discordant music (Chinese). In a little while we were told we must receive the bows and thanks of the bride and bridegroom, who were by this time seated in the shop (with their backs to the street and to the crowd of people), on two high chairs covered with red cloth. This ceremony over, we were conducted across the street into another large shop, open to the street, which had been hired for the occasion. Here we partook of the feast. Eight people sat at each table, and soon were hard at work with chop-sticks and basins, getting rid of the greasy thirteen courses as quickly as possible. Each course was fat pork in a new guise, and soon the tables were in a filthy condition. A Chinese feast must be *seen* to be realised.

Chinese Bride.

After wiping my fingers on paper provided for the purpose, putting the greasy pile before me into some more paper, and tying the whole (in the orthodox way) in my pocket-handkerchief, I rose, received the bridegroom's bow on the threshold, and having entered the sedan at the door, returned home, thankful to get rid of my bundle, and to wash off—I won't say the grease—but the greasy *feeling* I had.

EMILY M. JOHNSON.

WHAT SHALL WE EAT?

BY ELIZABETH MARTYN.

IT is cheering to know that many mothers are asking for further information concerning that good thing with a long and ugly name—vegetarianism.

Let me say at the outset (before attempting to make any suggestions or offer any recipes) that what we have to aim at in feeding a child is not only to build him up in bone, flesh, and muscle, but to train him in a right way of feeding, so that from habit and liking he will not depart from it, but will train his successors in the same way. If a child dislikes the food we impose upon him there will be a reaction when he is his own master. He will grow up thinking too much about food and drink, and excess in both may be the consequence.

The food, then, should not be all of one kind, nor should it be the same from day to day. It should be temptingly served; that is, with much cleanliness and as daintily as possible. A tidy, white tablecloth, brightly polished spoons, and clean mugs or cups make the plainest fare appetising; and why should there not be a vase of flowers on the table, even if nothing but butter-cups be at hand?

Imagine, then, such a nursery-table surrounded by boys and girls whose breakfast appetites are all in order. What are you going to give them? Some sort of porridge to begin with, but not over-large platefuls, even of that. A child is often repelled by the look of the great quantity he is expected to swallow. When he gets it down he can eat nothing else, and surely it is better to eat one or two things that will harmonise, than a large amount of one thing.

There are a few, a very few, children with whom oatmeal-porridge does not agree; and there are others who can take it well in winter-time but not in summer. Every mother will judge for herself. She will be glad to know that she is not restricted to porridge of oatmeal. She can make porridge of wheat-meal, of barley-meal, of Indian meal. Last, but not least, there is hominy, dear to the American palate. It must be steeped in water over-night, boiled next morning for twenty minutes or half an hour, and eaten with syrup or sugar and milk.

For making oatmeal-porridge I much prefer the coarsest of meal. It is called pinhead meal, and it needs long boiling, or rather simmering—the longer the better. A good plan is to let it swell over-night in the following way: Have your saucepan ready on the fire, with the water boiling. Put the oatmeal (a small handful for each person) into a basin, and empty it all at once from the basin into the bubbling water. No need to sprinkle gingerly; the coarsely ground meal will not clot into ugly lumps. Stir and boil for five minutes (or for longer if you have time), and then shut down the lid tightly upon the pot and let the oatmeal steam and swell somewhere near the fire, but quite out of reach of possible burning. In the morning you will find, most likely, that it has absorbed all the water. Add boiling water from the kettle, and let the porridge boil up again. After this it is better not to boil it fast and furiously, but let it stand where it can simmer slowly but constantly. It may be that you will have to add water once or twice more, but be sure that it is boiling water. You can go about your work all the time, giving your porridge a look and a stir as you pass by. The result is at breakfast-time a delicious, soft, jelly-like substance. A great bother? No; not if one has the interest of the household at heart. A girl who had been eating this porridge every morning for months, but who had had nothing to do with the providing or the preparation thereof, imagined that it was made of the very finest meal. The taste, however, is much nicer than that of the fine or "medium" meal. Let me say, in the language of the advertiser, ask for pinhead meal, and see that you get it.

Scotch people, as a rule, do not make good porridge. They use meal which is either fine or "medium," and they sprinkle and go on sprinkling until the water is thick. The grains have no room to swell, and the porridge, when turned out, is a hard, pasty mass, in which the spoon will sometimes stand upright. It tastes raw, and cannot be digestible. Get Scotch oatmeal by all means, but do not cook it after the Scotch manner.

The one drawback to the use of soft foods like porridge is that one is apt to let them slide down the throat without mastication. In this way no use is made of the teeth or of the salivary glands, and the stomach has more work to do than is proper, because the food has not been mixed with saliva. For this reason many careful people advise our eating bread, figs, or dates with porridge—anything, in fact, which will compel us to give the "thirty-two bites" so strongly recommended by Mr. Gladstone.

The porridge-course is over, and here come the strawberries. Strawberries! you say; think of the expense! What is the expense compared with that of meat? If we give up meat we shall have money to spare for fruit. The feeling at the bottom of our minds is that meat is a necessity and fruit a luxury. When we once come to understand that fruit is the necessity, and that meat is not even a luxury, we shall cease to talk of expense. Besides, if the demand for fruit were greater the supply would be greater, and would very soon be cheaper.

Well, then, strawberries and cream, or strawberries and milk, or strawberries simply with a little sugar, or strawberries alone—what can be more delightful? Next day the fare may be stewed gooseberries. We must remember, by the way, that cooked and uncooked fruit are not to be eaten at the same meal; they digest unequally. So, suppose we have raspberries on another day, and stewed cherries on yet another (stone fruit is safer stewed than raw). For a fifth breakfast we may provide ripe gooseberries or currants—red, black, and white.

I have said nothing of beverages, because a plentiful supply of fruit does away with the necessity for much drink. In winter hot milk, or cocoa made with milk, is good.

Breakfast is thus easily disposed of. But what about dinner. Let us begin with soup. What, soup in warm weather? Why not? There is always danger in summer-time of taking what is too cold, and of getting an inward chill. After the warm soup has gone down, one can more safely give children (who may have come in hot and tired) something cooler and more refreshing.

Lentil soup, for instance, is easily made, and is always liked. The late Mr. Gibson Ward wrote of it as "cheapest and best among soups." Of lentils themselves he said, "The nutrition in them is of the best possible description. Everything that a human being requires as food is there. A

penny expended in lentils affords more nutriment than three shillings expended in lean beef. Infants fed indirectly on such food are free from ailments, and full of strength and vitality."

Here are two recipes for lentil soup:—

1. Take one pound of lentils (price twopence), one or two onions, pepper and salt to taste. Wash the lentils, slice the onions, and put both into five pints of boiling water. Boil fast for an hour, and add the pepper and salt only a few minutes before serving. Any other vegetables may be used with the onions. If you buy whole lentils (and they certainly make the best soup) the boiling must go on fast and furiously for two or three hours.

2. One quart of Egyptian red lentils, two pounds of turnips, one pound of carrots, one Spanish onion, one root of celery, one ounce of parsley, and two ounces of butter (an ounce, by the way, is equal to a large tablespoonful). Wash and pick the lentils, set them on the fire in four quarts of spring water, add the vegetables and some salt; boil till quite soft, rub through a colander or coarse sieve, adding boiling water as required; return it to the pan, season with pepper and salt, stir in the butter, and boil a few minutes. For the celery, when out of season, substitute celery-seed tied up in a little muslin bag, or essence of celery.

This second recipe and the following ones I have permission to take from Mrs. Brotherton's "Vegetarian Cookery," published by F. Pitman, 20, Paternoster Row.

Rice Soup.—Six ounces of rice, one quart of milk, two ounces of butter. Wash and pick the rice, put it in an earthen vessel with a quart of water, and set it in an oven. When the water is absorbed put the rice in a pan with the milk, set it over the fire, and stir in the butter; season with salt and white pepper, and boil it ten minutes.

Tomato Soup.—Twelve ripe tomatoes, one onion, one pint of new milk. Divide the tomatoes, squeeze out the seeds, cut off the stalks; put them, with the onion and a pint of water, into a pan, and let them simmer about an hour. When they begin to boil add some salt and pepper. Press them through a sieve, put them again into the pan, and set them over the fire. When hot, stir in the milk (previously mixed with a teaspoonful of flour) and boil five minutes.

Haricot Bean Soup.—Half a pint of haricot beans, a tablespoonful of tapioca, half a teaspoonful of chopped parsley, and the same of thyme. Wash and pick the beans, put them in an earthenware dish with three quarts of boiling water, cover, and let them simmer in the oven for four hours. When they have been in the oven about two hours and a half add the tapioca. About half an hour before they are done add the parsley and thyme, season with pepper and salt, and just at the last stir in a little butter.

Green Peas Soup.—Three pints of peas, four onions, three turnips, four ounces of cucumber, one large lettuce, a small bunch of parsley, two sprigs of mint, and two quarts of pea-shells. Boil a quart of the largest peas in two quarts of water, with the mint, parsley, pea-shells, salt, and a little carbonate of soda. When the peas are quite soft rub through a colander or sieve, return the pulp into the pan with the other vegetables (sliced) and a quart of boiling water. When the vegetables are perfectly soft, add the other peas, previously boiled.

(To be continued.)

HANDY THINGS.

What sort of insane folly is it that possesses some of us at times, and makes us save all our odds and ends of every description, under the delusion that they will "come handy" some time? They never do "come handy," but we cling to them with great tenacity, instead of having the goodness to bestow them on the ash-man as his rightful prerogatives.

My wife and I have well-developed economical tendencies, and we pride ourselves on never wasting a thing that may "be useful" or "come handy" at any time in the dim future.

I was cleaning out the accumulation of years in a closet in the basement, and piling most of its contents up for the ash-man, when my wife came down-stairs.

"There are some things in that closet I want saved," she said; "they'll come handy some time." But I resolved to be firm.

"You don't want this?" I said, holding up an old tea-kettle without any spout and with six big holes in the bottom of it.

"Well, it might come handy for something some day."

I tossed it into the ash-barrel, and held up a pair of old boots discarded four years ago, and now green with mould.

"No use in saving these, is there?" I asked.

"Well, I don't know. A little piece of leather often comes handy in a house for a hinge or something."

I called to mind a pair of leather hinges I once made, and the boots followed the tea-kettle.

"What do you want this rusty old hoopskirt for?"

"Oh, a piece of hoopskirt wire often comes in useful in a house."

"It hasn't been asked for in this house since before the war," I said. "Here's an old hat of mine that's been lying around nine years. Better throw it away, hadn't I?"

"Well, perhaps so. I've often thought of giving it to some poor man, but I forget it every time a tramp comes around. I gave it to one tramp, and he went off and left it on the front gate post."

"Showed his good sense," I said. "Do you want all these old broken dishes?"

"Yes. I'll have them all mended some day. I've intended having it done for five years." When her back was turned they went into the ash-barrel.

"No use in saving these old bottles, eh?"

"Well, a bottle's a handy thing to have around. Better save them."

"My dear," I said, "here are at least seventy-five old bottles, and, to my certain knowledge, we don't use one a year, and I think we can trust our great-great-great-great-grandchildren to get their own bottles; so here they go."

In the same daring, reckless way I threw away three old brushes, old bonnets, breeches, lamps, skillets, hair-combings, shoes, sawdust, tin pans, old papers, pop-corn, wormy walnuts, soap-grease, broken lamps, spoutless teapots, bottomless coffee-pots, cracked kettles, and ten thousand other things that had years and years waited their turn to "come handy," but which never would or could "come handy" in this world.—*Detroit Free Press.*

HER SPHERE.

BY ELIZABETH P. ALLAN.

"Mother, Miss Susan has had a little fortune left her."

"A fortune? Miss Susan? Nonsense, Herbert; why do you say such childish things?"

"A child is supposed to speak a simple, unvarnished tale, isn't it? Well, my admiring mother, that is just what I am doing. Miss Susan, I tell you, has had a fortune left her."

"By whom?"

"Ah! now your curiosity comes to the rescue of your unbelief; you grant me, then, that Miss Susan has had a fortune left her?"

"I would grant you a box on the ear if my hands were not so busy just now, for teasing me about a matter that you must know I am sincerely interested in."

Mr. Herbert Johns' handsome mother threw enough reproach into her tone to bring the young man to more sober speech. He landed his chair safely on its four legs, after pirouetting it around on one, and left off bantering his mother.

"Yes, madam; in good earnest, her Californian uncle has left her 10,000 dollars."

"Is it possible? I wonder what the good soul will do with it? I really am afraid, Herbert, that the change, at her time of life, will make her unhappy."

"Then I hope, mother, that you will suggest to her to give it to me. It would not make me unhappy, I assure you."

But Mrs. Johns was not far wrong. Miss Susan Park had learned the dressmaking trade while she was a girl in her teens. She was a woman of forty now, doing an excellent business, getting a dollar and a half a day, and laying by a little something every year. She was entirely content with her lot. The Californian lawyer's letter had upset her whole plan of life. Instead of becoming the beneficiary of the Old Ladies' Home, for the consideration of 350 dollars entrance fee, which had heretofore been her early ambition, Miss Susan now felt both the pleasure and the responsibility of a possible benefactress, and what, indeed, as Mrs. Johns has said, should she do with it?

"I'm thinking of setting up an orphan asylum, ma'am," Miss Susan said, in answer to the kind lady, the next time she went to her for a day's sewing.

"An orphan asylum!" exclaimed Mrs. Johns, in natural surprise.

The old maid's cheek was still fresh enough to colour deeply.

"Yes'm, I love children. I think I'd hardly want to go to heaven if I could have a dozen of them, with blue eyes, and curls, and white dresses, in my house all the time."

This was the old maid's first dream of what to do with her money. Mrs. Johns had not the heart to break in upon it with cruel facts, of dirty, wilful, unruly, diseased, ungrateful little creatures, such as she well knew fell to the lot of most orphan asylums. She only said—

"Don't be hasty, Susan; take some time to look around you before you make up your mind."

"Well, Mrs. Johns," said the heiress, plaintively, some weeks later, "I'm glad enough I took your advice about looking round a bit, before I set out for an orphan asylum. I went to the Home of the Helpless, told 'em what I was thinkin' about, and asked them to let me stay a few days and look 'round. But, land's sake! I could hardly stick it out for two days. I didn't have an idee that childer was so noisy and so pesterin'. If I was younger maybe I could get used to 'em, but it wouldn't suit me now, no way."

There was something in Miss Susan's decided tone which suggested to her patron's sharp ears that some other object had risen above the old maid's horizon, and she promptly turned her glass upon it.

"Well, yes'm," reluctantly admitted Miss Susan, "I did get hold of a plan that it seemed likely would just suit. The doctor at the house says they're awful short of nurses; he says, says he, 'you'd make a good lady superior, Sister Susan.' It does sound a little popish, but we wouldn't wear crosses, nor black veils, nor nothin' like that."

She looked anxiously at Mrs. Johns; her approval had been Miss Susan's law for so many years that she could not be comfortable without it. But that lady shook her head sagaciously.

"Don't you get yourself pledged to a nurse's life till you have tried it," she said warningly; "remember the orphans."

Miss Susan was evidently disappointed at her friend's lack of enthusiasm, but agreed to take a nurse's position at once, and put herself to the proof.

"Mother," said Mr. Herbert Johns, coming into her dressing-room one day, "did you set Miss Susan Park up for a nurse?"

"No, my dear," answered the lady, trying vaguely to recall what she had done in the matter; "but why? She hasn't poisoned anybody, I hope."

Mr. Herbert picked out his favourite chair, and then sat down to enjoy a good laugh.

"I ran across the good soul to-day at Mr. Lancaster's, who, by the way, is very sick, and of all the sights she was the most absurd; gotten up in some fanciful costume of cap and cape, and so on."

"How did she seem to be getting on?" asked his mother.

"Well, I was there about eleven o'clock," he answered, taking out his watch and regarding it attentively; "it is now two, and I'll eat my hat if one or the other of that duet isn't stark crazy by this time, but I'd make a safer bet on Miss Susan herself."

"Oh, Herbert, what sort of a speech is that? Do tell me what you mean."

"I mean," said he, with an effort to look reasonable, "that Miss Susan has about as good an idea of nursing as a blacksmith, and I felt obliged to go and tell Dr. Carr so."

It was some time before Miss Susan could be coaxed back to Mrs. Johns' house, but the tide of confession set in at last.

"Yes, I like to went crazy at the job; the doctor told me so many things to do and not to do that I was all in a muddle, and then, bless your life, the sick man wouldn't let me do anything. He just swore at me, and told me to let him alone and go about my business. Now you know I never could stand with my hands folded, doing nothing, so I tried to tip around and tidy things up a bit on the sly; but la, me, I'd as soon go into a wild beast's den as try to nurse a sick man again."

Little by little came further confessions. Miss Susan had thought of making a home for old people; of going on a foreign mission; of being a tract distributor; in fact, she

had aspired to all the forms of usefulness open to her ken.

"But 'taint no use," she said, breaking down into a good old-fashioned cry; "seems as if I couldn't do any of the things that the Lord wants done. I don't see what good I am, anyhow."

The soft folds of Mrs. Jones' surah fell over Miss Susan's scant calico skirt, as the handsome, fashionably dressed woman sat down on the sofa close to the disconsolate old maid. The shapely white hand was laid over the bony fingers that had known such constant labour, and Miss Susan's friend spoke as soothingly as one does to a tired child.

"Now, Susan, I want to tell you something. I went to Mrs. Brown's high tea last week, and while a party of us were sitting at a cluster of little tables, eating wafers and sipping bouillon, your name was mentioned."

"'I am so sorry to hear that Miss Susan is going to give up sewing,' said one; 'not on account of the sewing; of course somebody else can do that; but I shall miss the little woman so much. I always feel more charitable to my fellow-men, more reverent towards my Maker, more humble-minded and less frivolous when I have had her in my house for two weeks.'"

Mrs. Johns paused, and Miss Susan's downcast eyes were full of tears.

"Then," she continued, "another lady spoke up.

"'Yes, indeed,' she said, 'you can't think what a loss she'll be to me. I have always said I owed Miss Susan

Park a great deal for her influence over my girls. They have always been devoted to her, ever since they were little tots sitting by and getting her to cut out quilt pieces; and now that they are grown they still love and admire her. Her gentle Christian character, together with her pure, high-minded views of things, and the earnest little speeches she makes, checks their levity and vanity. Oh, I assure you I could cry about her leaving her old customers!'"

As Mrs. Johns talked on, telling the lonely old maid how one and another household loved and valued her, a streak of sunshine seemed to touch her tears with rainbow colours.

"Go 'long, Mrs. Johns," she said, blushing like a girl; "ain't you 'shamed to be saying such things to my face? but I feel all made over, somehow, by what you tell me. La, how nice it will be to go to Mrs. Holmes' next week, and make over her blue chaille. As for my money, I'll tell you a secret, Mrs. Johns. I was so beat out about it that I took the papers and things last week to Mr. Herbert, and he promised to tie it up in something so I couldn't get any more if I wanted it, 'cept the interest, and I'm just going to divide that 'round. When I come to think of it, I know lots o' people that'll be pleased to get a little help out of it, and then I won't have any more stayin' awake at nights. If you b'lieve me, my fingers are fairly aching this minute to get hold of Mrs. Holmes' blue chaille."

HESSIE'S TRUST.

BY FLORENCE UPTON.

It was a moonlight night in Rupert's Land, North West America, many, many years ago. An almost unearthly stillness reigned over everything around. The moon hung like a great lamp in the sky—such a sky! of the darkest sapphire blue, studded with stars of dazzling brilliancy, faintly reflected in the huge lake beneath, shining like points of fire on the polished ice of its surface. For winter was here, the magnificent but often deadly winter of the north, and vast wastes of snow seemed to cover the whole world. Every tree bent low with its weight of icicles; every bush or small elevation lay buried in one white level.

The only object really free from the blinding glare was a house situated on the borders of the lake, something between an Indian wigwam and an ordinary settler's cottage. The snow had been swept carefully from the roof and sides, and a thin wreath of smoke was stealing out of the one chimney it possessed, rising straight as an arrow into the frosty air.

The family were assembled within the only good-sized room that the cottage could boast of—a diminutive family enough, consisting of three people, but that till now had been as happy as any in the wide continent of America.

John Wilson, the father, whose business was that of fur-trading, in a humble way, with the neighbouring Prairie Indians, was crouching over the bit of fire on the hearth. He was a hollow-eyed man, with a hectic flush on his wasted cheek. He coughed incessantly, and helped himself eagerly and constantly from the pitcher of water that stood on the table beside him, for a burning thirst was upon him, the thirst that famine fever brings with it. John Wilson had not been altogether provident, perhaps. He had been wont to live from hand to mouth in too free and careless a manner, and he had trusted entirely to his gun for support and commerce, save a monthly expedition to the nearest Hudson's Bay Company's fort for flour and other necessary articles of civilisation. A sudden accident, more than a week ago, when John Wilson sprained his ankle severely, happened just at the time when all household provisions had run perilously short. The trading Indians, who were in the habit of calling occasionally for the purpose of examining and buying valuable furs, often brought presents of buffalo meat with them; and their arrival, delayed for an unusually extended period, had been anticipated, oh, with what cruel anxiety, these last few miserable days! And meanwhile Wilson, never a strong man at best, was literally starving to death.

"Hessie," he said now, as he laid his hot hand upon the bright curly head of his little daughter, that rested so confidingly against "poorly father's" knee, and Mrs. Wilson looked up with a sad smile—it was hours since the invalid had spoken last—"my wee Hessie! what will become of mother and you when I am gone?"

But the child, fast asleep, made no reply.

"Don't!" the woman cried passionately. She was engaged in stirring something which she had placed in a saucepan upon the top of the glowing wooden log—poor weak stuff it appeared to be, made from certain herbs dug painfully out of the hard iron ground; but this, such as it was, *this*, reader, was all the sustenance they had, or expected to have, for the present! "Don't talk of 'going' John! It will break my heart. You are better to-night!" she said, with a catch in her voice that belied her own hopefulness. Her face was sharp and thin too, and there was an anxiety about her whole appearance that, spite of the previous suffering which had fallen to Wilson's share, he had never yet worn.

"John," after a pause, and interrupting the silence that had fallen on them again, "whatever are we to do if the Indians do not come by *to-morrow?* We cannot live much

longer like this. You will die of hunger. We shall all die if help does not arrive very quickly."

Her husband looked up quietly. That choking sound in Kate Wilson's speech might have unmanned him at another time. *Now* the peace of a struggle nearly ended was stealing fast over him.

"We can do nothing, wife; you're a weakly thing yourself, and cannot handle my big gun. No, we can do nothing but still trust in God. He won't fail us, we may be sure of that. He feeds the young ravens that call upon Him. Isn't that somewhere in the Bible?"

Hessie woke presently, and got up and joined her mother. She was a pretty, gentle child of six, far less pinched than were her parents, with cheeks still rounded and rosy, and blue, unclouded eyes. Ah! they had given her their portion of meat many a time. They could bear anything but Hessie's cries for food. "Mother," she whispered, standing on tiptoe beside Mrs. Wilson at the table—"oh, mother, dear, I do want some supper so badly! You know we've had no dinner and no tea. We *are* going to have supper, aren't we?"

Mrs. Wilson's tears started at the wistful tones; alas! this was the first day Hessie would ask in vain!

"You forget father!" she said. "Hessie, darling, we will give up our suppers, you and I, to father, who is so ill—won't we? You can wait a little while longer?"

"Is father *very* poorly, mother?" in an awestruck voice. "Isn't it a great while since he went out to shoot?"

"He tried, child. He dragged himself out yesterday a few steps. But there! he could not hold his gun. Father would never have got back again but for my arm, Hessie. You were playing at the back of the cottage, dear. That's how you missed it. Ay, play while you can; youth won't last for ever."

The last words were bitter; and Hessie wondered vaguely if *mother* could be growing cross! Matters must be coming to a pass if that were the case—her baby mind decided.

"I don't mind much about supper, mother;" with a heavy sigh and lingering glance at the savoury contents of the saucepan, now being poured out into a willow-pattern porringer that had once belonged to the kitchen of a warm, cosy English dwelling.

"I'll give it to father, all my share. Mother, are *you* hungry?"

"No, darling, no. I don't feel as if I should ever be hungry again. Take this to father, Hessie."

But John Wilson, parched with thirst so that he could scarcely speak, turned with loathing from the steaming broth. He had closed his eyes, and opened them with difficulty at Hessie's approach. "I can't take it, my lamb," he said faintly; "I could not swallow a drop. You and mother must have it."

Hessie, with self-denial rare in so young a child, pressed what her own healthy appetite craved for lovingly on her mother. "Oh, do, dear mother!" she pleaded; "just one little spoonful; and then perhaps you won't cry so!" as Mrs. Wilson's streaming tears fell into the liquid before her. In vain; Hessie's entreaties were powerless, and the child drank it all with an intense relish, then went back sorrowfully to her father, and nestled by him once more. Mrs. Wilson sat down on the opposite side of the fireplace, watching her husband and thinking busily—not weeping; her very grief seemed freezing.

"Won't Sigenock ever come to see us again, mother? He said he loved us. It's ever and ever so long since he came, and he promised me a tiny squirrel."

"Yes, Hessie, he would come if he could," was the dreary answer, as the woman rocked herself to and fro in her misery; "at least I don't know. He may have forgotten us altogether. We are forsaken by God and man alike, seems to me! And we have no furs left now, to exchange with him. Perhaps he is dead or starving himself."

"Father is fast asleep now," Hessie announced next, with satisfaction. Her spirits were not easily damped. "*Now*, mother," very coaxingly, "will you tell me about your old home, and how happy you used to be, and where you always had enough to eat?" This at the moment appeared the great desideratum of life to little Hessie Wilson.

"My old home?" the mother repeated absently. "Oh, I can't, Hessie! I can't! Not to-night, of all nights. If we were only, *only* there!" She stopped abruptly, and sat on wrapped in a kind of despair. What if John should never wake more? What if she and he were to die before the morning? The flickering lamp went out, and only a dull light from the hearth illuminated the chill room. A worse chill had descended upon her spirit.

Hessie struggled to her feet and crept to her mother's side; her eyes were drooping so that she could scarcely keep them unclosed. "Mother, aren't we going to bed to-night? I must say my prayers, you know. I've not said them all this time!" a doubtful pucker on her fair brow. She knelt down and offered up the baby petition without which Hessie could not lie happily in her little bed. "Shall I say my text, too, mammie?"

She did not wait for a reply; the strained look was deepening on her mother's face.

"He shall give His angels charge over thee." Hessie uttered the words sleepily but confidently, with a simple but utter trust in the certainty of their fulfilment. She had been wont to learn a fresh text every evening, but this was the same that had been said for several nights as it happened, and the sacred promise thrilled Kate Wilson's heart now. "Where is your faith?" a secret voice asked her, and suddenly there darted into her mind a great and heroic resolve.

(To be continued.)

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

October often brings bright, clear days, when the air is warm and scarce a leaf stirs, but for all that it is the season of "calm decay," and all the furies of the winds may descend upon us at any moment, making the air chilly and sharp, even if actual frost and snow do not set in before the month is over. Still, we hardly cast aside the summer frocks. The prints and muslins may be rough-dried, but the beiges, and flannelettes, and thin serges do us good service, especially if we are provided with neat, warm little jackets to put on for the protection of chest and neck, and the arms between elbows and shoulder, and it is easy to wear an extra petticoat. We give an illustration of one of these jackets, which has a vest or waistcoat that fits closely, and loose fronts. If made in black or dark blue, with the waistcoat embroidered in gold, this is a very handsome garment, and may be worn over anything; but in many cases, especially where the roads are very dusty, a light drab relieved with a darker shade or with revers of dark brown silk looks well, and is particularly useful. The thin grey cloths that look so pretty are only suitable for those who can afford plenty of change, for both sun and dust affect them, and they soon fade and look soiled. This applies to the lavendery shades of grey, and not to those compounded of black and white, which invariably wear well.

In preparing winter clothing, when lining, etc., has to be bought, it is as well to consider what linings are the best. For dresses of late years we have had printed cottons, with a small pattern on one side and a black surface on the other. This has the great advantage that the lining does not show through the material nor exhibit white gaps at the seams. But at the same time this black surface powders off and becomes a dust, that comes through the outer material, and also soils the under-clothing, and consequently one of the great Irish firms that devote themselves to the manufacture of linen (Richardson and Owden) have re-introduced the old Holland linings in several shades, with a soft finish and absence of dress that makes them very nice for body linings. Another point worth consideration is lining with a thin grey or brown woollen material made for the purpose, and over and above the hygienic properties of woollen linings remains the fact that they are very soft, and according to French dressmakers that is the *sine quâ non* of a body lining.

A mistake into which young dressmakers often fall, especially young ladies who have taken lessons in the art in order to make their own, is that of buying everything new, in order that the inside of their skirts and bodices may look "professional." Neatness is much to be commended, and it is a very old saying that the inside of one's work ought to be as presentable as the outside, but it is half the saving of home dressmaking to be able to take advantage of and turn to account whatever we may have by us. Bone casings, for instance, are just as effectual made neatly of strips of old silk as of new ribbon. The lining of sleeves at the wrist or the turning up of the basque all round is, of course, new sarcenet, if made by a dressmaker who has to charge for her etceteras; but at home it can frequently be made of odds and ends of ribbon or silk that has done duty in some other form. This is the way in which "money saved is money gained," and it does not detract at all from the good effect when the garment is finished.

Many ladies are absolutely eschewing every kind of ornamental adjunct to their walking dresses. The band at the throat is neatly finished, sometimes in a point, but quite as often without, and no brooch is used to fasten it. There is no waistband or buckle, the watch is worn on an unobtrusive ribbon or silk cord, bangles have disappeared, and the whole get-up is perfectly plain. This would be very sensible but that with many people it is a mere matter of fashion; still, it is evident that a woman can be quite as stylish without jewellery as with it.

A great many dresses are being made with sleeves finished off at the wrist, with a frill springing from under a band of crossway silk or satin. Into these is tacked a frill of lisse or Indian muslin, or, of course, a piece of deep lace is very suitable. It will be a welcome change to many who are tired of the plain coat sleeve, and as it does not wear out quite so fast, it is rather a change for the better, besides being slightly more dressy for in-door and evening wear.

Watered silk is going out again, and our old friends the broché silks are being used in its stead, while plain satin or ribbed silk is once more in favour for sashes. But for the Empire sashes, which are folded round the waist under a Figaro jacket, the soft China silks still hold their own, and very good ones may be bought in a variety of shades at 1s. 6d. a yard.

A very lovely dress just sent over from Paris for a lady who rarely allows herself to wear any colours but black and white is a slate-grey cashmere made up with a full plain skirt, crossover bodice, and puffs in the tops of the sleeves made by three slashes in the cashmere, through which silk was drawn. This arrangement allowed of a slate-coloured silk, full vest and puffings, which were removable and could be replaced by a set of pale yellow, or rather maize colour. With the latter it was very suitable for a quiet evening or any occasion of that kind.

There is very little change in the way of head-gear. The bonnets fit the head closely, and are eminently comfortable, and lace lappets or ribbon strings are quite the order of the day. Lace boas are more in vogue than ever, and many are made of a kind of looped knitting laid out flat and lined with a self-coloured or contrasting ribbon. They are very nice while new, but washing ruins the loops and the appearance of the whole thing.

The flat pattern of the Jacket may be had by enclosing 8½d. in stamps to M. L., at the office of The Mothers' Companion.